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The Sky Is Falling

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On a warm night in Nevada, the air so dry it seemed cool, children played and danced in the streets as fireworks exploded overhead. It was the Fourth of July, and it seemed that every family on the block was outside. The parents were complaining; however, of the condition of the sky, because on this night the sky was alive. Alive with vibrant, bright stars. In fact, the sky was so bright that the fireworks were barely visible.

By the time the final bottle rocket popped trivially against the bright canvas of the midnight sky, the families were already beginning to pack up their things. The sky was lit so well that no one needed flashlights. One boy even exclaimed, "Momma, it is so bright me and my pals could play all night", as he was being corralled into a car.

All the families got back to their houses and slept soundly. They slept through the night and well into the morning. Even the early-risers were in bed longer than they had expected. This was because the morning sun had never slithered its way over the horizon, through cracked windows, and into unopened eyes.

That night the stars fell. They fell from the sky and onto the pavement like marbles spilling from a bag. Over on Miller Street there was the Big Dipper. The Little Dipper was three streets down. The Great Bear, The Little Dog, The Hunter and The Unicorn all landed somewhere.

The next morning when the families finally did arise, they found nothing but utter and complete darkness. They explained away this phenomenon as a solar eclipse, or something to that effect, and no one seemed to mind. The children continued in their recreational habits of playing in the streets. Today, how-

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ever, they had millions upon billions of tiny new toys. These so called marbles were the subjects of many new games. There was a ransacking of all the neighborhood streets as the children feigned the new toys. By the end of the second day, almost all of the marbles had been found.

Days passed and the children's games continued. They were livelier than ever. All the children clanged and banged their marbles against those of the other children competing for more and more marbles. All the while, no one noticed the minute detail that each marble withheld. Each one was completely different. They each had an atmosphere, mountain ranges, and even features completely unique to themselves. Some even had civilizations.

Upon closer observation, it could be seen that these civilizations were also faced with the same predicament. Of course, the humans' planet wasn't the only one the stars had landed on. Each and every civilization had children and adults alike foraging through streets, alleyways, and even the countryside in search of the shiny new marbles.

On one particular planet from constellation Canis Major, it too seemed that every marble had been plucked away. And this made one little girl, much smaller than the rest, very sad. She was always whining to her mother that no one ever let her do anything, and now she was the only child on the row who hadn't found one of the orbs.

But this little girl was resilient, and she packed her flare-beam and went out in search of any orb she could find. Little did she know, every marble was gone, except for one. One bluish green, medium sized orb had somehow escaped the other children's tormenting games. As she walked down the row, her beam flashed the orb that was hidden beside the drain. It

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glimmered and caught the girl's eye. She bent down to pick it up and dropped it into her bag with a thud; back on earth, the whole world shook.

Humans were in disarray. Over the course of the past few weeks there had been a flash from the sky and many earthquakes. No one could agree on an answer and this led to chaos. Some sought a scientific answer. They said that the sun had aligned with the moon and a combination of other planets. This alignment was supposed to cause perpetual darkness and eventually end mankind. But others sought religious answers. Many people wandered the streets screaming verses from the book of Revelation. According to them, this was the beginning of the second coming, and souls should be saved. In addition, other people began to worry about the foolish things. Like, how much money would they have to spend on electricity? And, what would become of their summer tans?

In the end, people fortified their houses like mini armories. They only allowed their family and close friends to enter, and paranoia was abroad. There were even instances of small-scale civil wars.

Meanwhile, back on Canis Major, the young little girl was admiring her blue-green orb. Since the day of her discovery, she had been very protective of her orb. She really only touched it when she had to clean it. In contrast, all the other children were constantly playing with theirs. Some of them even battled each other in orb-games. The victor was always rewarded with more orbs. All the while, the little girl watched and waited.

Then one day, her brother came home. She was cleaning her orb like usual, and her brother rushed into her room ranting and raving about some new orb he had won. When she saw it,

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she thought it was the most beautiful orb she had ever seen. It was large and yellow. She was sure it was bigger than all of the rest. She knew at once she must have it. Blinded by envy, she went to her brother and explained that she would play him in an orb-game. The wager was each sibling's respective orb, and he readily agreed to the deal. He had been eyeing her orb from the day she had found it. He wasn't sure what it was about that one, but there was something more to it.

She went over to her desk and picked up her bag. She reached in and gently removed her only orb. Her brother was already on the floor warming up his shooting finger. She got down with him and for the first time saw the two orbs together. Hers was tiny in comparison to his, and his seemed to be glowing. But she was resilient.

The game commenced and the two children hurled their orbs towards one another. The brother was well practiced, but he knew it wouldn't matter in this battle. His orb was just too big. Yet, the sister was determined and passionate, and she flung her orb with all of her might. The orbs were headed straight for one another. The brother's orb was moving much faster than its competitor, despite the sister's efforts. In the final nanosecond before the two orbs collided, the girl felt remorse. Then the big glowing yellow orb smashed into the blue-green planet. Her only orb cracked open before their eyes, and a burning hot red liquid seeped from the fracture. The girl wept.

Back on Earth all was quiet. There were no longer any debates. There was no longer science or religion. The fortified houses were burnt to the ground, and not a single trace of human life remained.